

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS ON MIHAJLOV

1. NEW YORK TIMES OF FEB. 24 CARRIED PIECE BY MALCOLM
BROWNE UNDER HEADLINE "MIHAJLOV, DISSIDENT, REPORTED
'GRAVELY ILL IN YUGOSLAV JAIL.' TEXT FOLLOWS:

--- MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV, A DISSIDENT WRITER CURRENTLY SER-
VING A SEVEN-YEAR PRISON TERM FOR CRITICIZING THE YUGOSLAV
GOVERNMENT, WAS REPORTED TODAY TO BE "GRAVELY ILL" AND
EXTREMELY WEAK AS THE RESULT OF A HUNGER STRIKE.

--- THE 41-YEAR-OLD WRITER, WHO HAS BEEN IMPRISONED SINCE
OCT. 7, 1974, BEGAN HIS HUNGER STRIKE LAST DECEMBER AT
SREMSKA MITROVICA PRISON, 45 MILES FROM HERE.

--- HE HAS BEEN DEMANDING MORE HEAT FOR HIS CELL, CONTACT
WITH OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS AT THE JAIL AND RELIGIOUS
READING MATTER, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

--- ACCORDING TO FRIENDS WHO VISITED MR. MIHAJLOV OVER THE
WEEKEND, HE IS NOW BLOATED AND APPARENTLY SUFFERING FROM
JAUNDICE. HE WAS DESCRIBED AS VERY WEAK BUT DETERMINED TO
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CONTINUE HIS HUNGER STRIKE "TO THE FINISH."

--- THEY SAID HE HAS BEEN SUSTAINED DURING THE LAST TWO MONTHS MAINLY BY TEA AND COFFEE WITH MILK, BUT WITHOUT SOLID FOOD.

--- HE IS NOT BEING FORCE-FED, AND A PRISON DOCTOR WAS SAID TO HAVE RECOMMENDED TO HIM THAT HE TAKE SALT TO REDUCE THE BLOATING.

--- A BELGRADE DOCTOR, TOLD OF THE REPORT, SAID THAT ON THE BASIS OF THE DESCRIPTION, MR. MIHAJLOV MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO DIE IN TWO WEEKS.

--- MR. MIHAJLOV, OF RUSSIAN EXTRACTION, IS A SCHOLAR IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE, BUT HIS TROUBLE WITH THE GOVERNMENT RESULTED FROM VARIOUS ARTICLES HE HAS WRITTEN ON POLITICAL THEMES. BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN FORBIDDEN TO PUBLISH IN YUGOSLAVIA, SUCH ARTICLES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED ABROAD, IN THE NEW YORK TIMES, AMONG OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

--- WHILE HP HAS MANY SUPPORTERS AND SYMPATHIZERS ABROAD, HIS WORK IS SCARCELY KNOWN IN YUGOSLAVIA.

--- IN 1965, HE HAD HIS FIRST BRUSH WITH THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT FOR WRITING CRITICALLY ABOUT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. AT THAT TIME HE WAS EXPELLED FROM HIS TEACHING POSITION AT A YUGOSLAV UNIVERSITY AND GIVEN A SUSPENDED PRISON SENTENCE FOR "CALUMNY AGAINST A FRIENDLY COUNTRY."

--- HE WAS CHARGED WITH HAVING DISSEMINATED "HOSTILE PROPAGANDA" IN SEPTEMBER 1966, AND THAT TIME WENT TO JAIL, SERVING THREE AND ONE HALF YEARS BEFORE HE WAS RELEASED ON PROBATION.

--- AFTER HIS RELEASE HE WAS DENIED EMPLOYMENT IN THIS COUNTRY BUT WAS ALSO DENIED PERMISSION TO LEAVE, AND WAS COMPELLED TO LIVE ON THE MEAGER EARNINGS OF HIS WIFE, WHO IS A PROOFREADER. BUT HE CONTINUED TO WRITE OCCASIONAL ARTICLES FOR FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS.

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--- FOR THIS, HE WAS ARRESTED AGAIN IN OCTOBER 1974. ON THE EVE OF HIS TRIAL, WHICH BEGAN FEB. 25 LAST YEAR, PRESIDENT TITO SPOKE ON NATIONAL TELEVISION AND RADIO TO DENOUNCE MR. MIHAJLOV. AT THE TRIAL, TO WHICH THE LONDON-BASED ORGANIZATION AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SENT REPRESENTATIVES, EXPERT WITNESSES AND VARIOUS EVIDENCE THE DEFENSE HAD REQUESTED WERE DENIED MR. MIHAJLOV WAS SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS.

--- DURING THE LAST THREE WEEKS AND AS RECENTLY AS LAST FRIDAY, GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN HAVE DENIED THAT MR. MIHAJLOV WAS IN ANY DANGER AS A RESULT OF HIS HUNGER STRIKE. TWO WEEKS AGO, FRIENDS REPORTED THAT HE STILL SEEMED STRONG, ALTHOUGH HIS MORALE WAS EXTREMELY POOR.

2. WASHINGTON POST OF SAME DATE HAD STORY BY DUSKO DODER SLUGGED, "YUGOSLAV AUTHOR SAID NEAR DEATH." TEXT FOLLOWS.

--- MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV, THE IMPRISONED YUGOSLAV AUTHOR, WAS REPORTED TODAY TO BE IN GRAVE CONDITION AS A RESULT OF HIS HUNGER STRIKE. FRIENDS WHO VISITED HIM SATURDAY SAID THEY WERE "EXTREMELY WORRIED THAT HE MAY DIE" IN PRISON.

--- THE DISSIDENT AUTHOR, WHO WAS SENTENCED TO SEVEN YEARS FOR HIS CRITICAL ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE WEST, BEGAN HIS HUNGER STRIKE ON DEC. 6 TO PROTEST HARSH PRISON CONDITIONS. HE IS SAID TO HAVE LOST MORE THAN 40 POUNDS.

--- DESPITE THE LOSS OF WEIGHT, THE AUTHOR'S BODY IS DESCRIBED AS BLOATED AND HIS COMPLEXION AS YELLOW. THE BODY SWELLING SEEMS TO INDICATE FAILURE OF HIS CIRCULATORY SYSTEM CAUSED BY PROTEIN DEPLETION AND NUTRITIONAL AND CHEMICAL IMBALANCE. HIS ONLY SUSTENANCE IS SAID TO BE WATER, TEA AND COFFEE.

--- MIHAJLOV, 42, A FORMER UNIVERSITY LECTURER IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE, WAS IMPRISONED MORE THAN A YEAR AGO FOR HAVING PUBLISHED IN WESTERN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN JOURNALS A SERIES OF ARTICLES AND ESSAYS THAT WERE DESCRIBED BY THE PROSECUTION AS EVIDENCE OF HIS "HOSTILE" ACTIVITIES AND UNCLASSIFIED

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PROPAGANDA AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA.

--- HE ACHIEVED INTERNATIONAL PROMINENCE WITH HIS ESSAY "MOSCOW SUMMER 1964" WHICH WAS BASED ON HIS EXPERIENCES IN THE SOVIET UNION AS AN EXCHANGE SCHOLAR. MIHAJLOV WAS CRITICAL OF WHAT HE CALLED THE REMNANTS OF STALINISM IN THE SOVIET UNION.

--- HE WAS SENTENCED THEN TO FIVE MONTHS FOR 'SLANDERING THE SOVIET UNION,' BUT WAS PARDONED AFTER HAVING SERVED ONE MONTH. FOLLOWING HIS RELEASE, HE WROTE A SERIES OF ARTICLES CRITICIZING PRESIDENT TITO'S GOVERNMENT AS TOTALITARIAN. FOR THOSE HE WAS SENTENCED TO THREE AND ONE HALF YEARS IN JAIL, AND RELEASED IN 1970.

--- IN THE DEMANDS TO PRISON AUTHORITIES THAT PRECIPITATED HIS HUNGER STRIKE, MIHAJLOV ASKED THAT HE BE PERMITTED TO RECEIVE PUBLICATIONS NOT SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED UNDER YUGOSLAV LAW, THAT HIS CELL BE HEATED DURING THE DAY, THAT HE BE ALLOWED TO HAVE A TRANSISTOR RADIO AND THAT POLITICAL PRISONERS BE SEPARATED FROM CRIMINALS. KISSINGER

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